

Plaintiff wants to cross-examine Syed Hamid Albar
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KUALA LUMPUR - A Christian woman whose eight compact discs (CDs) of Christian religious teachings containing the word "Allah" were confiscated by the Home Ministry, wants to cross-examine then Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar (left) over the decision to confiscate the CDs.

Jill Ireland Lawrence Bill filed the application last week for her lawyer to cross-examine Syed Hamid on the sworn affidavit filed by the former minister, for the purposes of the hearing of her judicial review application.

In the application, Jill, 27, also wanted to cross-examine a customs officer, Suzanah Muin, who was the one to actually seize the CDs.

The plaintiff said she wanted to cross-examine Syed Hamid on the grounds among others, to justify his action in prohibiting the importation of the CDs, his action over the use of the word "Allah" being exclusive to the religion of Islam, and she is also contesting the truth of the averments affirmed by Syed Hamid in his affidavit.

Jill said she wanted to cross-examine Suzana as there was dispute between Suzana's and her (Jill's) affidavits.

Syed Hamid in his affidavit had said that the decision to prohibit the importation of the CDs was in the interest of public security.

High Court Senior assistant registrar Halilah Suboh set Oct 11 for mention of the case after meeting the parties in chambers Monday.

On May last year, Jill, 27, a clerk, represented by counsel Annou Xavier, obtained leave from the High Court to apply for the judicial review against the Home Minister and the government's decision.

She is seeking three reliefs -- to quash the ministry's decision to confiscate the CDs; an order of mandamus to direct the ministry to return the CDs to her; and a declaration that she has legitimate expectation to exercise her right to possess, use and import publications containing the word "Allah".

On May 11, 2008, the ministry seized the CDs under Section 9 (1) of the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 when Jill disembarked at the Low Cost Carrier Terminal (LCCT) in Sepang.

The CDs containing titles including "Cara Menggunakan Kunci Kerajaan Allah", "Cara Hidup Dalam Kerajaan Allah" and "Ibadah Yang Benar Dalam Kerajaan Allah" were brought in from Indonesia.

A Sarawakian native of the Christian faith, Jill claimed that she used the word "Allah" in her prayers, worship and religious education.

She claimed that she also used both Bahasa Malaysia and the Bahasa Indonesia versions of the Bible which used the word "Allah".

She further claimed that she received a letter dated July 7, 2008 from the ministry outlining the reasons for the confiscation, which stated among others that they (CDs) were a threat to public security, used prohibited words and were in breach of Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim) guidelines. - Bernama
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